Emergence of Civilizations / Anthro 341: Notes 19

China: A comparative case

- Regional and temporal setting
  - geographically isolated from the cases we have looked at so far
  - very different tradition in many ways
  - cities and complex society appeared distinctly later in time, although still very old
  - very large area
  - very variable geography and ecology
  - We will focus on the Yellow river area (also called Huang Ho, Hwang Ho, or Huanghe river)
    - for cultural purposes reaches to parts of the Yangtze river area to the south
    - this is where civilization really got started in China
  - Yellow river environment
    - in many areas, it is a winding river in a wide valley that cuts through plains of deep, rich soil
      - bounded by river terraces that were wooded
      - roughly similar to the Mississippi and Ohio rivers in the US midwest
    - within the valley floor, the river shifts course, floods, and carries a lot of sediment (hence its "yellow" color)
    - result is a very fertile agricultural region dotted with lakes and marshes
    - in the times we are looking at, environment was wetter and warmer than today's semiarid climate
    - a more pleasant, greener environment than any we have looked at so far

- such a large region had many different cultural traditions
  - your various sources (including my lectures) all organize this material slightly differently…sorry.
  - I am using a simplified version of KC Chang's framework

- There are several ways to write Chinese in our alphabet
  - KC Chang uses the older Wade-Giles system, recognizable by its many apostrophes, hyphens, and other diacritical marks
  - The more current system is "pinyin". I have converted as many terms as possible to pinyin forms, but have not been able to find equivalents for them all

- the Yellow river area was populated by Paleolithic foragers by 11,000 BC, pretty quickly after the Pleistocene
  - not like the Mesopotamian or Indus drainages, where few people lived until they adopted agriculture

- Early Neolithic 8000-5000 BC
  - numerous cultures and periods that we won't cover here

- climate and rich, varied vegetation were ideal for early domestication
- a completely different agricultural tradition from what we have seen so far
  - swidden agriculture (also called shifting agriculture, or slash-and-burn)
  - based on millet, a grain (not rice, as you might suppose)
  - also other plants
    - beans, peas, bottle gourds, olive, cucumber, oil cabbage, walnut, hazelnut, acorn, etc.
  - evidence of agriculture
    - the grain itself (two types of millet) has been found in some sites
      - in some cases, in storage pits among the houses
    - sickles for harvesting grain or grasses
    - axes for clearing trees off land
    - grinding stones for grinding grain
    - shifting (slash-and-burn) pattern is implied because many sites had fairly short, repeated occupations
  - domesticated animals
    - pigs, dogs, chickens (chickens were domesticated in Asia)
  - wild animals
    - deer of various types
  - basically small village farmers

- Regional Neolithic 5000-3000 BC
  - By 5000 BC, there were several distinct Neolithic cultures around China
    - northern Chinese cultures all based on millet (includes the Yellow River region)
    - southern Chinese cultures all based on rice, plus some root crops (which we won't look at much here)
  - the Regional Neolithic was a very long period (2000 years)
    - this was the period in which Neolithic society began to get complex
    - spanning ‘Ubaid, Uruk, and Jemdet Nasr in Mesopotamia
    - so there was time for a lot of change between the beginning and the end of the Regional Neolithic
  - Yangshao culture (5000-3000 BC)
    - the most widespread and best known of the Regional Neolithic cultures
    - middle Yellow River valley
    - subsistence
      - agriculture was the main source of food
        - evidence of farming
          - hoes, spades, axes, possible digging sticks: the usual Neolithic tools
          - grain impressions in ceramics
          - grinding stones: preparation of flour for bread, mush, soup
        - crops
          - millet (two types, foxtail and broom-corn)
          - hemp, probably for fibers (cloth)
        - still probably slash and burn

- hunted, fished, and gathered a wide range of wild plant and animal foods
- domesticated animals
  - dogs and pigs common, chickens
  - cattle, sheep, and goats rare
  - silkworms! (a half-cut cocoon found!)

- Yangshao settlements
  - densely distributed on lower river terraces
    - for access to rivers as well as higher terraces and mountains
  - relatively short occupations (several years to several decades), shifting, repeated settlements returning to the same locations (appropriate for slash and burn agriculture)
  - three Yangshao villages are well known from broad areal excavations
  - all three were 5-6 ha (2-3 times the SSU main quad)
    - that is pretty good-sized; remember PPNA Jericho at 2 to 4 ha
    - populations of several hundred people
  - fully or partially surrounded by a ditch 1.5 m (5-6 feet) wide and deep
    - Wenke and Olszewski call this a “defensive moat”, but was it?
  - fairly permanent houses
    - various different shapes
    - plastered floors, benches, walls
    - often wood and branch structures thickly plastered with clay, which was then often hardened in place with fire, making a durable wall
      - this is a technology you have not heard about anywhere else…
    - houses surrounded by storage pits
      - storage by households, not centralized
  - houses arranged in groups around a central, open plaza
    - Chiang-chai had five such groups of houses, averaging 20 houses each
    - each group had one larger house
    - groups of houses may represent kin groups? clans and lineages?
  - a bit later, Chiang-chai had a 20 m long (65 feet) longhouse in the center of the town (12.5 m wide)
    - ceremonial?
    - communal activities (“meeting hall”)?
  - all three Yangshao villages had a pottery-making area on one side of the village
    - suggesting some craft specialization already
    - one contained six kilns
  - all had a cemetery area located roughly south of the village
    - minor variation in goods, but with occasional notably rich burials
      - one had a 3-4 year old child, buried in a plank-lined pit with 79 vessels and stone artifacts, plus quantities of millet
        - suggesting that at least some status was based on birth or family, not just on accomplishments
      - numerous other ways in which the burials varied:
        - some contained one body, others contained many

        - some were primary (the body was buried intact, shortly after death), while others were secondary (the body was either allowed to decay to bones before burial, or was dug up and reburied as bones after it decayed)
        - some burial pits were surrounded by a zone of rocks, flanked by shell "mosaics" in the shapes of animals, etc.
        - this may reflect complex differences in roles in life (shamans? others?) as well as simply social standing
    - i.e. burial evidence of some real status differentiation already, including apparently heritable status
        - before cities, large populations, even permanent agriculture
        - relatively early in the cultural development of China, compared to our other cases
        - strong status variation and ascribed (inherited) status both became enduring themes in Chinese society
    - like the houses, the graves were grouped into clusters, each with the full range of types of burials
    - Chiang-chai's cemetery had 3 sectors
        - maybe these groups of graves also represent kin groups, like the house clusters?
    - one site (Yuan-chün-maio) had 57 burials in 6 rows
        - buried in two parallel sequences at the same time
            - rows 1 and 4, then 2 and 5, then 3 and 6
        - suggests two descent groups?
            - both using the cemetery at the same time
            - but each with its own area in the cemetery
- Social organization
    - Maybe by hierarchical kin groups, as later in China?
        - the traditional arrangement known from later historical times may already have been present in the Regional Neolithic:
            - settlements divided into two or more clans
            - each of the clans has a status hierarchy within it, determined by descent, with one top-ranking family, with a top-ranking head of the family
            - the clans themselves are ranked, so that the head of one clan has a more respected position than the head of a lower-ranked one
    - this might be suggested by the groupings of houses and the groupings of burials
- Specialization
    - Probably some, maybe part time
    - pottery specialists
        - indicated by kiln areas and high quality of ceramics
        - ceramics were hand formed, some by coiling, but some rims were apparently finished on a "turntable" (tournette or slow wheel); a few small vessels may have been made on a fast wheel
        - ceramics with possible maker's marks suggest specialized producers?
    - small amount of metalworking must have been done by specialists
        - a bronze knife, cast in a two-part mold, dates 3000-2500 BC (i.e. terminal Yangshao); this is the earliest known Chinese bronze, but not yet a major industry

- silk production and hemp textile production may have been done by specialists
- Three late cultures of the Regional Neolithic period show even clearer emergence of social hierarchy and ritual activity
  - Dawenkou culture, Hongshan culture, Liangzhu culture in different areas
    - discussed in the readings by Barnes and by Fagan and Scarr
  - You needn't be able to separate these
  - the chronological bar chart shows how they overlap in time
    - all three began during the later centuries of the Yangshao culture, and continued after it
    - so they represent the culmination of Regional Neolithic trends, rather than the Regional Neolithic as a whole
  - Dawenkou culture = Ta-wen-k'ou (4300-2400 BC)
    - downriver from the Yangshao culture
    - illustrates trend towards more elaboration and variation in burial treatments
      - ledge burials for higher-status people, the ledge surrounding a wooden casket
      - the latest, richest burials feature a log chamber
      - one cemetery (Chengzi) was divided into sectors with burials of differing richness
        - 62% had no grave goods; mostly in the eastern sector
        - ~32% had a moderate quantity of goods
        - 5-7% had large pits, caskets, many grave goods
          - jade, ceramics
          - turtle shell, pig mandibles
        - these rich burials were concentrated in the northern sector
        - some goods (jade, turtle shell) were probably imported
        - indicates the emergence of a wealthier elite class
          - the spatial separation of their graves from those of lower-status people suggests that they may have been socially segregated in life, too
  - Hongshan culture (3500-2000 BC)
    - northeast of Yangshao
    - several Hongshan sites were not residential, but instead for special burials and probably ceremonial uses
      - these sites suggest more formal ceremonialism
        - probably ritual experts, maybe mobilization of surplus to build, maintain, and conduct rituals at the sites
      - elaborate, expensive burial practices suggest a marked upper class
    - Example: the Hongshan culture site of Dongshanzui (Tung-shan-tsui)
      - built of rock slabs
      - a possible plaza bounded by a wall of rock slabs, partially paved with stone slabs
      - surrounded by sherds of painted clay cylinders
      - about 2 dozen clay human figurines, from 6 cm (under 3") high to half life size
      - jade animal pendants
      - kept clean, no domestic garbage
    - Another example: Hutougou (Hu-t'ou-kou) (another Hongshan site)
      - burial of several people (in sequence) inside and outside of a low circular stone wall

        - under the wall, painted potsherds were buried
        - outside the wall, a row of 11 painted ceramic cylinders were buried
      - the burials contained many jade animal pendants
    - A third example: Niuheliang (Another Hongshan site)
      - a mortuary center with 13 groups of burial mounds
      - main burial mound surrounded by lesser ones
      - inside the main burial mound were "conjoined vaulted tunnels"
        - with paintings on the interior walls
        - the main burial contained the head of an unfired clay life-sized figurine with jade eyes
        - plus fragments of larger statues and animal figurines
        - also some secondary burials
- So, what was going on in the Regional Neolithic period (5000-3000 BC)?
  - People living in semi-permanent farming settlements (think of Yangshao villages), practicing slash-and-burn agriculture
    - clearly no cities at this point
  - Possibly organized into hierarchical clan groups
    - shown in clustering of houses and burials
  - Some social stratification implied by housing and burial variation
  - by the middle of the Regional Neolithic period, around 4000 BC:
    - different Neolithic groups in the Yellow river region were interacting more
    - increasing mutual influences in pottery and other artifact styles
    - This is what the term "Regional" refers to: the trend towards increasing similarity over the whole, broad region
      - a pattern we have seen before in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus
      - what does it mean?
        - more travel, trade, exchange of ideas?
        - maybe more people interacting has something to do with the emergence of civilization?
        - or vice versa?
  - By the end of the Regional Neolithic, and into the first half of the following period (the Longshan Horizon), there came to be:
    - marked wealth and status hierarchy
      - implied by rich burials in segregated areas of cemeteries
      - and apparent ritual importance of some individuals who were buried in special monuments, under big mounds, etc.
    - at least some craft specialization
      - implied by fancy burial goods
        - skilled craftspeople were presumably supported to make them
    - analogous to Naqada II? Maybe even more stratified?
    - considerable investment in ceremonial activities
      - elaborate burial structures and symbolic goods in them (masks, figurines, "painted cylinders", etc.)

      - non-residential structures imply increasing formal ceremonialism
        - probably ritual specialists
        - probably considerable power to mobilize labor and resources to build ceremonial sites and carry out activities at them
        - highly variable from region to region
    - but still with no settlements big enough to consider cities
    - no evidence of centralized storage or redistribution
    - little evidence of warfare, not even many weapons in burials
    - Chinese archaeologists see these early stratified societies as involving
      - elaborate, relatively expensive ritual, that presumably resulted in respect and power for people associated with it
      - strong hereditary status systems probably like the clans documented at later times
        - maybe the hereditary elite were ritual specialists, or supported them

- Another of the complex cultures of the late Regional Neolithic and later: Liangzhu culture (Liang-chu) (3500 - 2200 BC)
  - South of Yangshao culture, on the coastal plain around the lower Yangtze river
  - another culture which developed some very elaborate burials
    - often spatially segregated from poorer burials in the same cemetery
    - example of a rich burial at Ssu-tun
      - a young adult male
      - 4 ceramic vessels, 14 stone and jade implements, 49 jade ornaments
      - 24 jade rings and 33 jade cong tubes (also written as “ts'ung”)
        - cong tubes are apparently ritual objects, usually jade, that are rectangular blocks with faces carved on the outside and a large round hole through the center
        - the rings are also probably ritual, votive, etc.; they are not finger rings or personal ornaments
        - suggesting that this person was heavily involved in ritual activities, either as a ritual specialist himself or a patron of specialists
      - such fine workmanship in such a hard material implies a lot of wealth
    - another rich burial at Sidun was under a burial mound 20 meters high (65 feet!)
      - a young man
      - with over 100 jade artifacts
      - body and jades were partly burned
      - other burned burials around the mound are thought to be sacrifices
    - burials with “extra” crania at Chang-ling-shan
      - one burial with over 40 items plus three human crania
      - another with two “extra” crania and numerous “extra” limb bones
  - clearly a powerful, wealthy elite was emerging in this basically rural society
  - also developed a new style of pottery
    - black, highly polished, very finely made
    - very thin walls, often with bamboo-like ring or ridge designs, cutouts in ring bases
    - some made on a true, fast potter's wheel
    - suggests craft specialization

- This style of black pottery went on to became popular over a wide area of China
  - indicating an increased amount of interaction and shared ideas over a large area
  - and serving as a convenient marker for a period of time called the “Longshan horizon”

- The Longshan horizon (Lung-shan), started around 3500 BC with Liangzhu culture, became widespread by 2500 BC; lasted until about 1500 BC
  - also written Longshan or Longshan
  - a “horizon” that spread across northern China
    - a “horizon” is the extension of a style (usually of pottery) over a very wide area
      - horizons make convenient time markers
        - because sites that contain objects in the horizon style must be roughly contemporary with each other
      - horizon styles allow us to correlate what was happening in many different places at that same time
      - but since a horizon style may take a while to spread, appearance of the style in different places may not actually happen at the same moment
      - a horizon typically starts somewhere, and gets to its periphery later
      - horizons are also interesting because they imply widely shared ideas, probably beyond the pottery style that marks them
    - the Longshan horizon apparently started on the lower Yangtze river, in the Liangzhu culture, as early as 3500 BC
      - and for whatever reason, spread from there to the rest of an area of interacting cultures called the Neolithic “Chinese interaction sphere”
    - markers of the Longshan horizon
      - wheel-made, thin-walled black ceramics
      - pedestal vases with cutouts in pedestal (tou)
      - tripod pots (ting)
      - certain axe types
      - jade cong tubes (square outside with faces; large round hole inside)
      - scapulamancy (oracle bones)
    - this increasing similarity in ceramics and other goods was apparently not due to conquest, but to increasing interaction
      - because in each region there was a gradual local development towards the shared style
      - some items, like the cong tubes and oracle bones, probably reflect increasingly widespread, shared ideology or religious ideas
    - several cultures in different regions were involved
      - don't worry about keeping track of these subdivisions; I only separate them here because this might help you make sense of the readings
      - Longshan in the coastal Yangtze River area: Liangzhu culture (3500-2200 BC)
      - Longshan in the coastal Yellow River area: Shantung Longshan (2700-1500 BC)
        - arose out of Dawenkou culture
      - Longshan in the Middle Yellow River Valley
        - arose out of Yangshao culture
      - plus Longshan cultures in various other areas

- subsistence continued as before, but probably more permanent and intensive
- craft specialization apparently increased
  - pottery making probably required specialists
    - was made on a fast potter's wheel
    - kilns were more advanced
  - minor use of bronze for small objects probably implies specialist metalworkers
- settlements grew larger and many were walled
  - house styles remained similar to those of the Yangshao culture, with storage pits, etc.
  - similar organization, with clusters of houses around a central "long house"
  - but many sites were larger than Yangshao villages
  - possibly more permanent (longer occupations)
    - suggests a gradual shift from swidden towards more intensive, permanent agriculture
  - some settlements had massive rammed-earth walls
    - these are the first major defensive works in Chinese prehistory
      - in fact, the first "public" works of any kind requiring significant labor to build
      - prior to this, only some special burials even approached this investment
    - rammed-earth is also called "tamped earth", "stamped earth", "hangtu"
      - made of 12-14 cm thick layers of soil
      - very uniform, selected clean soil with aggregate stones added
      - pounded into wide, shallow molds
      - each layer 3 cm narrower than the one below, forming a slight taper
  - at Chengziyai (a town in the coastal Shantung area), the wall was 9 m (29 feet) thick, estimated 6 m (20 feet) high
    - the face was like a wall, but it was as massive as a whole solid building
    - encloses an area of 450 X 390 m (about 1/4 mile on each side)
    - about 18 hectares (could contain over 16 football fields)
    - rough estimate of population within the wall: probably between 500 and 3600 people
      - that is, a medium to large town, but not really big enough to be a city
    - yet an enormous labor investment in the wall
      - implies control of a lot of workers, agricultural surplus, etc.
      - extracting a huge amount of labor from the villagers, or maybe also drawing upon people living outside the walls – implying power over a surrounding hinterland
  - another walled settlement: Pingliangtai (middle Yellow River area)
    - rectangular rammed-earth wall 185 m (600 feet) on a side all around the town
      - wall is 13 m (42 feet) wide at base, remains still stand 3 m (10 feet) tall over 4000 years later!
      - two entrances (north and south), one with gatehouses
        - underground drains of pottery tubes go under this gate
    - 3.4 hectares (comparable to Jericho)
    - much smaller than Chengziyai i; illustrates considerable variation over this large region
    - inside are rectangular buildings of mud brick, up to several rooms, with storage pits
    - some on raised platforms, suggesting special status
    - craft production areas inside the wall (ceramic kilns and manufacture of stone artifacts)

- there were also much smaller walled compounds
  - both inside walled towns, and out in the countryside
  - square, 6 m (18 feet) on a side
  - on low rammed earth platforms (30 cm high)
    - although they don't look like much to us, these platforms would represent a lot of labor and would have been recognized as a privilege of wealth
    - the platforms often contained sacrificial burials, and people would have known that
  - these would be high-status houses, like fortified villas
  - residences of powerful leaders of largely rural people?
- several towns were around 17 hectares, still pretty small for "cities" in the western sense
  - but maybe a lot of people lived outside the walled area?
- warfare and violence escalated dramatically
  - town walls suggest fear of attack
  - big increase in spear points and arrow points in the coastal Shantung area
    - the points make up a much higher percentage of all bone and stone artifacts than in earlier periods
    - since the people presumably were farming more than before and hunting less, the rise in points may be for weapons rather than hunting
  - Site of Chien-kou (middle Yellow River area)
    - surrounded by a circular town wall
    - within a house, six human skulls with signs of blows and scalping
    - two water wells that were stuffed with five layers of human bodies
      - male and female, all ages
      - some decapitated, some without feet
  - KC Chang sees this period as the beginning of "institutionalized violence"
    - between walled settlements: raids or warfare
    - within settlements
      - construction and burial sacrifices indicate ritual "peacetime" violence
      - carried out for rituals associated with high-status people
- ritual practices became more elaborate, specialized, and associated with the elite
  - oracle bones: "scapulamancy" became widespread
    - deer, ox, sheep scapulae
    - depressions carved into one side of the bone; a hot poker placed in the depression; cracks form that were apparently used to tell the future
    - but without any signs of writing yet
    - suggests rise of specialized shamans
  - animal "masks" or faces on pottery and jade artifacts are thought to have ritual significance
  - infant burials under house posts, under walls, or in walls
    - thought to be sacrifices for house-building rituals
  - some sites have rammed-earth house platforms that contain pits filled with layers of rammed earth and up to 7 burials between the layers
    - including both adults and children

- thought to be ritual sacrifices associated with construction
- sacrifice had shifted from animals to people
- suggests increased power of elites, literally over life and death

- burials had even more drastic variation in grave wealth than seen before
  - at Chengziyai, burials clustered in three groups, each with a range from poor to rich
    - suggests "stratified lineage" structure of historical China
    - that is, three lineages, each with its own hierarchy
    - this seems to continue the emphasis on separate lineages that we saw in the Regional Neolithic, especially in Yangshao villages and cemeteries
  - huge cemetery of T'ao-ssu, over 1000 burials excavated, thousands more probably remain
    - a wide range of graves
      - 87% were small, shallow, with few goods
      - 11% had wooden coffins, numerous ceramics, axes, jade ornaments, cong tubes, etc.
      - 1% (9 total) were large (3x2.5m) pits with wood coffins and 100-200 items
        - all preserved skeletons in the large burials are male
        - five of the nine large graves had a "music set":
          - wooden drum covered with crocodile skin
          - "musical stone" (chime)
          - pottery tubes thought to be drums
          - this set of items symbolizes royalty in later Chinese texts
    - T'ao-ssu graves were arranged in at least two separate clusters, each with all three types
      - again, suggesting separate lineages with internal hierarchy
      - most of the medium graves cluster around the few large graves
        - but they apparently were not sacrifices
        - maybe they were associated with the very high status people in the big graves
      - the medium graves in one cluster were shallow and wide, while those in the other were deep and narrow
        - suggesting that two different social groups used the two different cemetery areas?
- overall, a drastic new stratification of wealth and power
  - implied by the huge, labor-intensive rammed-earth wall projects
  - indicated by variation in dwellings
    - on platforms or not
    - with sacrificed burials under them or in walls, or not
  - especially visible in burials
    - certain goods were restricted to the most elite burials (thin cup on high stem, pig mandible, "music set") suggesting a top class with special privileges
  - continued division of cemeteries into groups, possibly by descent (clan membership), each with its own internal hierarchy of status
  - increasing use of jade, ivory, turtle shells in ritual associated with elites
    - implies that they got these exotic goods by long-distance exchange, probably controlling traders, surplus, craft production for exchange, etc.
  - stratification is also implied by the elites' evident power to conduct human sacrifices during wall and platform construction

- this extreme stratification and widespread pottery style also associated with drastic rise in raids or warfare, as well as internal violence of sacrifices
- was this civilization?
  - compared to the other cases, it has an interesting mix of characteristics
  - lots of social stratification, craft specialization, and warfare
  - but limited urbanism, and still no writing
  - little or no centralized storage, few or small irrigation projects, monumental architecture?

- The Three Dynasties (Hsia, Shang, Chou) 2100-770 BC
  - in the centuries after 2000 BC, the first evidence of
    - real cities (urbanism) - although with differences
    - states
    - writing
  - the Three Dynasties are known a little from later documents that describe them as history
    - Hsia and Shang dynasties were once thought to be mythical
    - now archaeology has proved that the written records refer to real places and societies
  - a few existing texts from the first millennium BC tell us about Shang and later dynasties
    - they describe a society that was already up to 1000 years in the past
      - presumably based on written documents no longer available to us
    - these historical documents imply that that:
      - Shang China was composed of *yi*, or walled towns
      - the *yi* were organized hierarchically into *kuo*, or states
      - the *kuo* were ruled by the head of a clan, whose clan in turn was ranked relative to others in the same *kuo*
        - dynasties were simply the families of rulers (clan heads) of unusually successful *kuo* (states)
      - initially there were several hundred *kuo*
      - constantly at war, conquering and losing control of each other
    - this description sounds like the archaeologically-documented Longshan horizon
      - so the political organization of Longshan and Hsia societies might have been similar to what the documents describe for the Shang dynasty
  - relationship of the three dynasties
    - these “dynasties” actually overlapped in time and space
    - the “dynasties” also refer to styles of ceramics and bronzes, probably really ethnic or regional groups as well as family lines of leaders
    - rather than a simple sequence of rulers, the dynasties represent geographical centers or competing lineages which gained political and military preeminence at different times
    - since the Shang dynasty was clearly “civilized”, we won't go on to the western Chou here
  - Erlitou (Erh-li-t’ou) (site and culture) 2100-1800 BC (shown as Hsia area on the map)
    - debate about how to connect the archaeological evidence with the historical references
      - KC Chang: archaeological Erlitou = historical Hsia dyanasty?
      - Barnes: archaeological Erlitou = historical Early Shang?
    - The biggest Erlitou site, Erlitou itself, is huge, 1.5 x 2.5 km (375 hectares)
    - no city walls! (at least, not yet found)

- this seems unusual for this period; why no defenses?
- maybe the “elephant” defense: too big to attack, even without defenses?
- or the walls just have not been found yet?
- or there was a peaceful interlude?

- two enormous rammed earth platforms for “palace” structures
  - containing burials, possibly sacrificed
  - platforms were 1-2 m thick, but set into pits, so they projected only 80 cm above ground
  - the larger one was 100 x 108 m (325 x 350 feet)
    - that is a square as wide as the two wings and courtyard of Stevenson Hall
  - with an additional 36 x 25 m low platform set on top of the “back” of the main platform
  - with postholes for a rectangular hall 11 x 30 m
    - wattle and daub, gabled roof?
    - surrounded by a narrow (50-110 cm) rammed-earth wall at the edge of the platform
    - forming a veranda facing inwards, indicated by rows of postholes
    - this layout, with the gate to south and the building to north, is typical of later buildings known to be palaces
  - pottery drainpipes
- wide variation in burials
  - some have nothing
  - all the way up to others that have evidence of lacquered coffins, even more elaborate than Longshan types
  - bronze: decorated cups, weapons such as knives and halberds (dagger on a long shaft)
  - jades, turquoise inlays, lacquered wood, other wealth items
- oracle bones continued

- Shang Dynasty 1700-1100 BC
  - According to later histories
    - the Shang dynasty was founded by T’ang, who conquered the last of the Hsia kings
    - and founded a royal capital at a place called Po
    - later Shang kings moved the capital to other cities several times
    - 29 kings followed T’ang in the Shang dynasty
  - Early or Middle Shang (roughly 1700 - 1400 BC)
    - also called the Zhengzhou (Cheng-chou) phase, or the Erligang (Ehr-li-kang) phase
    - exemplified by the site of Zhengzhou
      - May be the first Shang capital, the historical “Po”
      - But Barnes thinks Zhengzhou is one of the later Shang capitals
    - Zhengzhou was the largest site of this time, 3.5 square kilometers (350 hectares)
      - surrounded by a rammed-earth wall
        - wall seen as enclosing ritual space, rather than literally for defense?
      - palace structures on rammed-earth platforms
      - bronze hairpins found in palace structures suggest high-status people lived there (no surprise)
      - large bronze, bone, and pottery shops outside the walls
        - at the bronze workshops, they

        - cast bronze arrowheads and spearheads
        - forged knives for use and display
        - cast the elaborate bronze vessels for which the Shang period is famous
            - decorated with complex faces or "masks" of supernatural beings
      - at the ceramic workshops, they made
        - fine ceramics for use and display
        - also "proto-porcelain", or ceramics of a specific composition, fired at a very high temperature that began to develop a glassy texture
      - at the bone workshops, they made
        - many ordinary bone implements, like combs
        - using bones from cattle
        - but at one bone workshop, there was a ditch that contained human crania, many with the tops sawn off
            - apparently to make bowls or cups that would be obviously from human remains…
            - indicates that the elite who supported or commissioned this work had an absolute control of life
            - and wanted to convey that to people that they entertained
  - at least three other sites of this period also had walls, suggesting warfare
    - chariots in burials also suggest the importance of warfare
  - but this period (early to middle Shang) did NOT yet have other Shang traits:
    - writing
    - royal mausoleums (yet)
- Late Shang (the "Yin phase"): Anyang, the Shang capital in the last 200-300 years of the dynasty (roughly 1400 - 1100 BC)
  - excavation at Anyang, starting in 1928, turned the Shang dynasty from legend into history
  - we can identify this site as the historical Anyang because oracle bones were found there that describe the names and travels of a series of eleven kings
    - the sequence of kings on these oracle bones matches historical lists of Shang kings
  - Anyang was a huge city
    - 24 square kilometers (2,400 hectares)
    - but not walled (as far as we know)
    - widely scattered sectors with distinct functions
      - not a single dense urban core
      - sectors of the site now have names of the different modern villages near them
        - this suggests how loose the "city's" plan was
        - and how different it was from the western or Mesopotamian concept of a city
  - Central "palace" sector with 53 buildings on rammed-earth platforms
    - divided into a residential area, a royal temple area, and a ceremonial area
    - lots of human sacrifices associated with construction of platforms
    - wattle-and-daub walls, stone bases for probably wooden pillars, gabled roofs
    - underground water ditches under foundations

  - high-status goods found in this area, like fancy cast bronze vessels
  - lots of oracle bones in the palace sector, confirming that oracle bones were clearly associated with royalty
  - high-status burials nearby, some with chariots and their horses
    - indicating that warfare and weaponry were associated with the palace and royalty
    - although the royal burials themselves were in a separate cemetery
  - round semi-subterranean houses surrounded the palaces, presumably for servants
- other sectors with housing, workshops, tombs
- workshops included
  - pottery kilns
  - two bone working areas
  - two large bronze foundries
- clay molds for casting bronze vessels and bone-working materials were found in one of the palaces
  - what was production material doing at the palace?
  - they suggest that the palace had a direct connection to the craftspeople making bone and bronze goods
    - presumably supporting and directing them
    - that is, they were attached specialists
  - not surprising, since some of the bone artifacts were made from people -- which requires a lot of power to enforce
  - and since bronze was closely associated with royalty in written accounts, residential debris, and burials
- a huge cemetery, with royal burials, burials of nobles, and hundreds of sacrificial victims
  - 11 large tombs, presumably of the 11 historical rulers of Anyang
    - all looted long ago
  - over 1000 small graves
  - large graves
    - at least 7000 person-days just to dig each pit
    - cross-shaped, with ramps
    - wooden chamber built in the center
    - human sacrifices all around
      - some in coffins - presumably higher status
      - some decapitated - presumably not so high status
      - some just heads or other parts
    - lots of bronze, jade, shell, bone, pottery, etc.
  - Tomb Number 5, of Fu Hao, consort to King Wu Ting
    - much smaller than the 11 kings' burials, but never looted
    - over 1,600 items in total, plus 7,000 cowry shells
    - over 440 bronzes, over 590 jades, over 560 bone objects, over 70 stone objects
  - Anyang was clearly home to fabulously wealthy royalty – and we don’t even have the contents of the really big tombs to judge by

- Origins and context of writing in China
  - earliest evidence of Chinese writing dates to the later Shang dynasty, around 1400 BC; well established by 1200 BC
    - many of the characters can be read, since they are recognizably versions of early Chinese writing, directly ancestral to modern Chinese writing
    - written on oracle bones and bronze vessels
      - the early examples, especially on bronzes, are generally just one or two characters, probably the name of the person who had the piece made
    - according to an early surviving text (but long after Shang dynasty), a lot was written on bamboo strips and silk – which would not survive in the ground
    - also, the character that looks like and refers to bound "books" of bamboo strips is found in late Shang inscriptions on bronzes and oracle bones, so these bamboo strip books were probably in use then
    - unfortunately, the founding emperor of the Ch'in Dynasty, around 100 BC, had all old books except those on medicine, divination, and agriculture burned
      - fortunately, a handful of books escaped
    - so there may have been a lot of early development of writing that has just not survived
  - The major early use of writing *that we know of* was scapulamancy (cattle scapulae) and plastromancy (on turtle plastron (shell))
    - continuation of the scapulamancy tradition of the Longshan horizon
    - cracked by applying heat to the back of a hollow bored in the piece
    - the cracks were numbered, then read in unknown manner
    - In Shang times, the cracks begin to have notations by them, showing the question and the answer
    - turtle shells were added in late Shang times
  - content
    - they record prophesies relating to royal entourage, events, etc., so they provide a lot of history
    - writing was later used for political activities, gifts, mortuary activities, edicts...
    - oracle bones are labeled with the question; prophesy; verification
      - often the king made the prophesy
      - surprisingly, the verification almost always shows him to have been correct...
    - Shang oracle bone c. 1200 - 1180 BC (from Keightley, in Senner 1989)
      - "Crack-making on chia-shen (day 21), Ch'ueh divined:" Charge: "Fu Hao's childbearing will be good." Prognostication: "The king, reading the cracks, said: 'If it be a *ting* day childbearing, it will be good. If it be a *keng* day childbearing, it will be extremely auspicious.'"
      - *ting* and *keng* are analogous to days of the week (Tuesday, Wednesday)
      - Verification: "On the 31st day, she gave birth. It was not good. It was a girl."
      - The baby was born on a *chia* day, thus the prophesy was correct.
      - Note: Fu Hao is the name of the "consort" in the unlooted large tomb at Anyang; the dates are right for this to refer to the same person!
    - other royal divinations involved groups of thousands of people for military and economic tasks

- bureaucratic approach to scapulamancy
  - regular placement of holes
  - cracks numbered
  - divinations paired in positive and negative forms
  - divinations were dated and followed up with a verification later
  - certain bones and shells were reserved for repeated use on the same subject, up to 170 days apart, suggesting a filing system of some sort
  - bones are often found in neat stacks, as if they had been archived in tied bundles or resting on shelves
    - implying specialist recordkeepers and some bureaucracy
  - NOT associated with business or record-keeping (at least what is preserved is not)
  - nature of the Chinese writing system
    - mostly logographic: one character means a whole word
      - similar sounding words could be indicated by the same symbol
      - ambiguities were resolved by adding determinatives, that is, marks that provided clues to which of several possible words was meant
      - the earliest oracle bones already have half their symbols marked with a determinative
        - this suggests that the system was already well developed by that time
        - so we really may be missing the early part of the development sequence
- generalizations about the Three Dynasties
  - subsistence
    - all were primarily millet farmers
      - based on textual evidence, Shang and Chou also used soybeans, wheat, some rice
    - all used dogs, pigs, cattle, sheep
  - NO notable change in technology from the Longshan horizon
    - no major irrigation projects known, no plows
  - bronze: an exception, or not?
    - used primarily for ritual (vessels) and war (weapons, chariot parts, etc.)
    - bronze was generally not used for tools for agriculture or other purposes
    - sophisticated bronze casting was mostly for ritual vessels
      - these vessels were highly decorated versions of otherwise identical ceramic forms
      - mostly used for holding, heating, and serving alcoholic drinks
  - capitals
    - not dense urban settlements, but rather networks of high and low status residential areas, administrative and ritual areas, workshop areas, cemeteries, etc.
    - rammed earth walls at some sites, maybe not at others
    - high-status wooden buildings on raised rammed-earth platforms
    - low-status housing was semi-subterranean, wattle-and-daub
  - warfare
    - Earlier Shang capital of Zhengzhou was walled, but Anyang was apparently not
    - a fair number of bronze weapons
    - chariots in Shang and Chou

    - written evidence of warring *kuo*
  - continuity of clan organization from Longshan horizon and earlier
    - based on inscriptions, layout of cemeteries, emblems on vessels in graves that say who they were made for
    - i.e. rank was based on ancestry?
    - hierarchy with most direct relatives of ancestral leaders closest to the top
  - burial practices: extreme stratification
  - power of the elite
    - tremendous control of labor and resources
      - yet no obvious evidence of centralized storage or redistribution
      - although there must have been some sort of tribute or taxation to support the elite
      - and written accounts of warfare and statecraft suggest that tribute extraction was an important purpose of it
    - apparent control of life and death, as well
    - elites apparently had a monopoly on shaman's paraphernalia
      - jades with animal faces (like cong tubes) associated with shamanic powers
      - oracle bones (and turtle shells in Shang and Chou)
      - in historical documents, the power of rulers was attributed to their control of bronzes
        - necessary for weapons
        - but also for ritual
        - for a ruler in the Chou Dynasty to be legitimate, he had to possess “the nine bronze tripods”; maybe something similar was true in earlier Shang times?
      - these bronze vessels would have given the elite control of supernatural matters, and legitimacy as rulers
        - elites could have arisen from ritual specialists
        - or could have employed them

- When would you first call it “civilization”?
  - Regional Neolithic?
  - Longshan horizon?
  - Erlitou / Hsia?
  - Early Shang? Late Shang?

- In what ways was complex society in China similar to, and different from, other cases?

- In what ways might the processes that led to Shang civilization have been similar to the other cases we have look at, and in what ways different?
  - roles of urbanism; ritual; warfare
  - origin and nature of elites
  - nature and purposes of monumental structures
  - nature and role of clan (descent group) organization